# RESEARCH BRIEF

# DROPOUTS IN FRENCH-LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

## A Study of the Identification of Potential Dropouts in French-Language Secondary Schools in Ontario

*Student Retention and Transition Series*

**PIERRE QUIROUETTE,** Principal Investigator
**ORANE SAINT-DENIS**
**NATHALIE HUOT**

This research project was funded under contract by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.
It reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Ministry.

Sean Conway, Minister
Bernard J. Shapiro, Deputy Minister

Ontario
Ministry
of
Education

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**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Quirouette, P.
Francophone dropouts

(Research brief)
Issued also in French under title: Décrocheurs francophones, une étude du dépistage des décrocheurs probables au sein des écoles secondaires françaises de l'Ontario.
ISBN 0-7729-6096-8

1. High school dropouts--Ontario. 2. Canadians, French-speaking--Ontario. 3. Dropout behavior, Prediction of. I. Saint-Denis, Orane. II. Huot, Nathalie. III. Ontario. Ministry of Education. IV. Title. V. Series: Research brief (Ontario. Ministry of Education)

LC145.C36Q57 1989 373.12'913'09713 C89-099654-7

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**AFTER FOOD, EDUCATION IS**

**THE PARAMOUNT NEED OF A NATION**

DANTON

**PART I.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This research paper summarizes the activities, various components and results of a project entitled "Francophone Dropouts: A Study of the Identification of Potential Dropouts in French-Language Secondary Schools in Ontario", Reports I (1986), II (1987) and III (1988) (available on microfiche in French only). The main objective was to develop a valid questionnaire to identify, upon their entry into the secondary school program, those students who are likely to drop out. We also wanted to sensitize a large number of those involved with education to the problems specific to this group of students and urge them to pay particular attention in this regard. Lastly, we wished to suggest various intervention strategies that the schools could implement with respect to the students identified, as well as providing the participating schools with documentation on the efficacy of the various interventions.

A project like this is not without its problems. Consideration had to be given to the problems inherent in any research project, i.e. funding, travel, diversity of target groups, etc. In addition, the proposed work with potential dropouts is special, since it implies a change in attitudes.

Those involved with education, teachers and administrators already have their work cut out for them and a research project that asks them to do "a bit more", to commit themselves even further to a target group of students is asking quite a lot. The very special circumstances in which Ontario francophone educators find themselves (belonging, as they do, to a cultural and

linguistic minority) adds a certain "degree of difficulty" to the situation.

In light of all these factors which had to be taken into account in assessing such a long-term project, we feel that we have acted effectively with respect to a great many students found to be potential dropouts. Over the past three years and during the pilot project, we have witnessed a significant decrease in the dropout rate in schools which opted for the structured implementation of certain intervention programs. The most beneficial intervention programs are those in which the target group can be defined most accurately. The questionnaire and the suggested intervention strategies allow the greatest possible return on the efforts that those involved with education are willing to make.

When we began the pilot project which led to the three stages of this project, there was much less interest in the dropout issue than has been demonstrated in the past few years. A number of province-wide studies have been done, various reports have made the headlines, and a large number of schools and school boards have implemented a wide variety of projects. All of these efforts are geared toward defining the characteristics of potential dropouts and coming to their assistance. Neither our three-stage project, nor the long list of projects done by others, can be considered "the solution" to the dropout problem. We have developed a means of identifying our target group. We have made some of those involved with education aware of the special needs of potential dropouts. Perhaps we have even convinced those in charge of education that in future, it is in the interests of everyone to meet the needs of these students.

## PART II. RESULTS

### 2.1 OVERALL RESULTS

The following are the percentages of dropouts identified, overall and by questionnaire area, which served as the cornerstone in implementing the intervention strategies in the schools. Our identification instrument, the questionnaire "School and Me?", is divided into eight sets of questions. These questions involve eight areas of the student's academic and personal life and permit determination of whether one or more of these areas may cause or influence the student to drop out of school. Potential dropouts are identified through their "negative" responses to each area or set of questions. The areas are as follows:

1. Family Characteristics,
2. Feeling of Isolation,
3. Academic Plans,
4. Performance,
5. Self-confidence,
6. Truancy,
7. The Need for Teacher Support,
8. Interest in School.

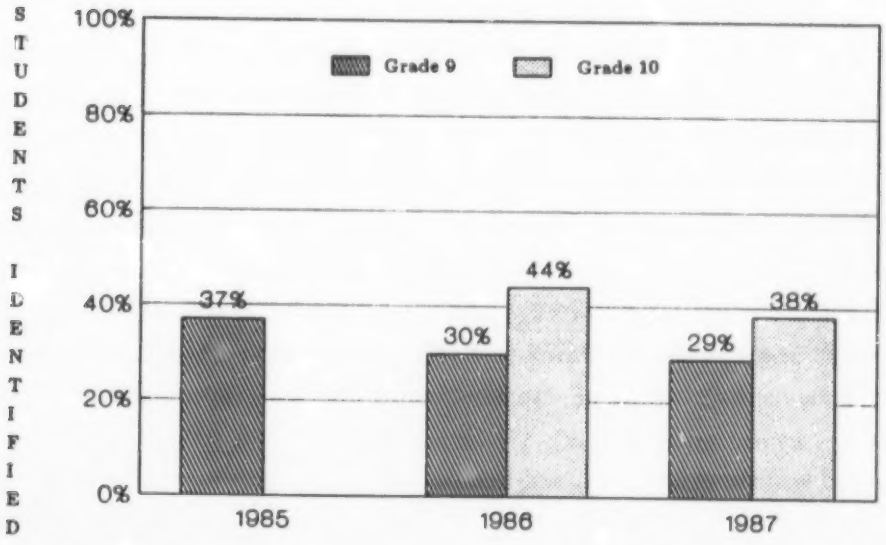
By the answers given to the questions, the student reveals any difficulties he or she is experiencing in any areas of his or her life. To be considered a potential dropout in a particular area, a student must choose several "negative" answers and attain a minimum score determined for that area. The student is thus identified as a potential dropout in one or more of the eight "School and Me?" questionnaire areas. Analysis of the results collected in 1985, 1986, and 1987 reveals certain tendencies related to the differences between boys and girls in Grades 9 and 10. In addition, the results

obtained by area are generally fairly stable. It is obvious, however, that these results may fluctuate widely between schools and between school years.

Figure 1 shows the overall results for all three stages of the project at the Grade 9 and 10 levels. In the fall of 1985, the questionnaire was administered to Grade 9 students only. (The questionnaire could not be administered to Grade 10 students as well, since there were a fair number of difficulties to overcome during this stage of the project.) At the time, no structured intervention program existed in the participating secondary schools. We believe that this accounts for the appreciably higher percentage of students identified that year than those in the two subsequent data collections. In 1985, the school dropout issue had not yet gained province-wide attention. Since then, numerous research projects have been done on this subject and provincial and regional conferences and workshops have been organized for teachers and administrators. In addition, a large number of school boards have created various committees or intervention programs in an attempt to find solutions to the problem. The fall of 1985 was an introductory period for both the dropout problem in Ontario and the method of identification we were developing.

**F I G U R E 1**

Percentage of Students Identified in Grades 9 and 10
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987




1985: 2 713 students
1986: 2 820 students
1987: 2 668 students

The "School and Me?" questionnaire was given to approximately the same number of students during each of the three stages of the project. In 1985, 28 French-language secondary schools participated in the project, while 24 schools took part in 1986. In 1987, 25 schools decided to administer the questionnaire. We were therefore fortunate enough to be able to count on the participation of almost all the French-language secondary schools in Ontario over a three-year period. The data collected over the first three years of the project were thus significant and, with respect to the three cohorts of students registered in French-language secondary schools, extremely valuable.

The Ontario Ministry of Education indicates that the dropout rate for high school students in Ontario is from 30 per cent to 33 per cent. Through the 1986 and 1987 data collections, we identified 30 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively, of Grade 9 students as potential dropouts. For Grade 10, these percentages were 44 per cent (1986) and 38 per cent (1987). The increases in the percentage of potential dropouts in Grade 10 have been discussed in the comprehensive reports on the three stages of our project (available only on microfiche). Another fact which must be stressed is that the percentage of students detected increases when the questionnaire is administered to those students entering Grade 10 who completed it in Grade 9. Some students encounter various difficulties during their first year of high school and thus a greater number have comments to make about these difficulties and school in general which may cause them to quit.

With the data compiled from the "School and Me?" questionnaire, we are confident of being able to identify the students who, at this point in their lives, have problems serious enough to warrant special attention from a teacher. Thanks to the implementation of special programs oriented towards potential dropouts, some of these students will receive the attention necessary to keep them in school until they graduate. Non-structured interventions, which do not take into account results obtained through an identification method, are not as worthwhile as an intervention program directed specifically toward a target group. Identifying a certain percentage of students as potential dropouts enables those involved with education to "take better aim". The results we have obtained over the past few years reflect the Ministry of Education statistics. Our overall results

contributed to the process designed to establish the predictive value of the "School and Me?" questionnaire.

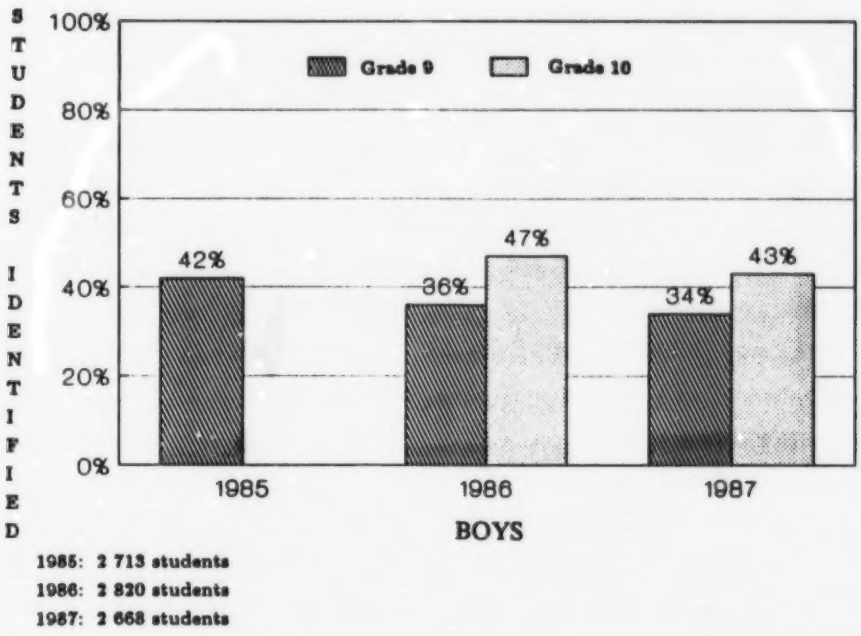
From the first year that the questionnaire was administered on a large scale, we realized that, in some respects, the results for boys and girls would be very different. This proved to be the case throughout the project. Overall, from all participating secondary schools, a greater number of boys than girls were identified as potential dropouts. In Ontario, more boys than girls drop out of school, as reflected in the data collected (Figures 2 and 3). On reviewing the overall results at each school, 5 per cent to 10 per cent more boys than girls stated that they had problems that could lead a fair number of them to leave school before obtaining a high school diploma.

So far, we have looked at the overall results from the three data collections. These data are certainly important and, undoubtedly, interesting. However, the real work with dropouts takes place in the schools. When the tremendous variation in the results obtained at the 28 French-language high schools that participated in the project for the three years is considered, it is obvious that each school had its own particular results. The variations may be significant - 11 per cent of the students were identified at a school that only accepts students taking advanced-level courses and 70 per cent at a school where students take only general and basic courses (Figure 4). The results obtained at each school depend on a number of factors: the socio-economic status of the students, the teachers, the administrators, the priorities of the different school boards, and other non-academic factors, i.e. the student's personality, character, life experience, and the combination of all of these factors which determine the dropout rate in any

given school. We have noted that changes in the school environment may significantly affect the number of students detected as potential dropouts.

**F I G U R E 2**

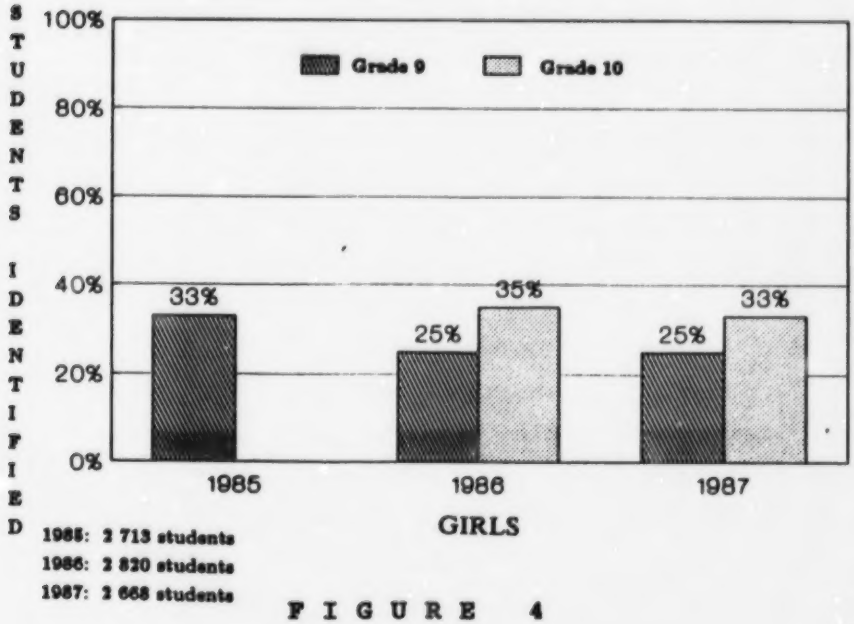
Percentage of Boys Identified in Grades 9 and 10 "School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987




1985: 2 713 students
1986: 2 820 students
1987: 2 668 students

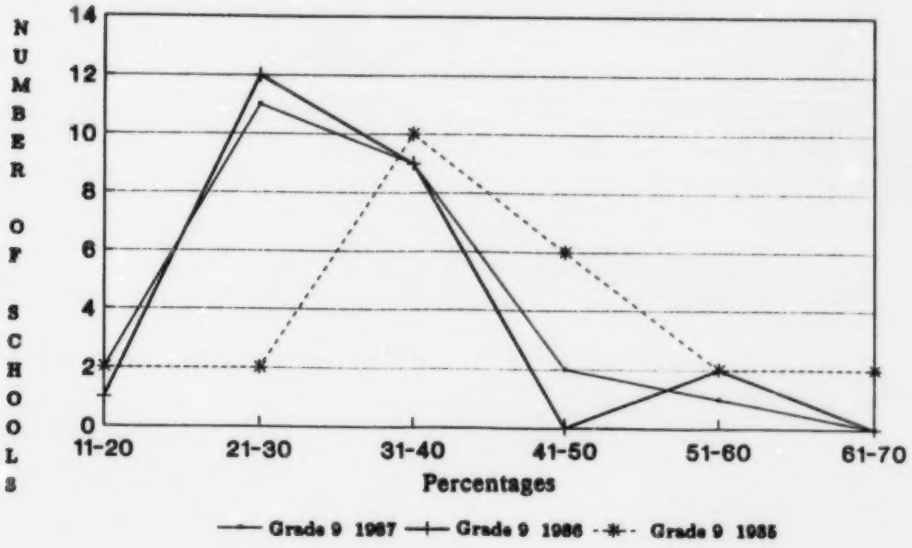
F I G U R E  3

Percentage of Girls Identified in Grades 9 and 10
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987




F I G U R E  4

Number of Schools and Percentage of Students Identified
Per Interval, Grade 9, 1985, 1986 and 1987



The overall results for the province are interesting as are the results obtained in the different schools and may be useful in planning and implementing intervention programs. However, it is on the individual, personal level that the answers to the "School and Me?" questionnaire assume the greatest importance.

## 2.2 RESULTS ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY IN FRANÇAIS AND MATHEMATICS

During the three data collections, students were asked at what level of difficulty they were taking français and mathematics. We intended to group the students, to determine whether a greater number would be identified at one level over another, whether there would be differences between boys and girls, and whether certain patterns related to registration and identification in Grades 9 and 10 can be seen (see Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10).

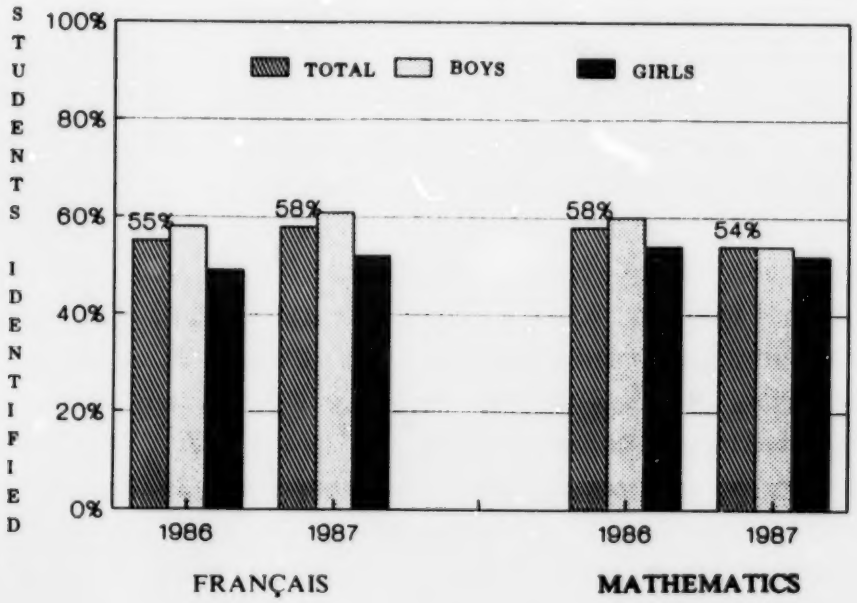
At first glance, the results obtained reveal a certain stability between the 1986 and 1987 data. Approximately the same number of boys and girls taking français and mathematics at the three levels of difficulty (basic, general, and advanced) were identified. In accordance with the pattern revealed by the overall results, more students (both boys and girls) were identified at all levels of difficulty in Grade 10. However, as mentioned in the Stage II and Stage III reports, the number of students taking advanced français and mathematics decreases in Grade 10. Moreover, the number of students identified increases among those taking the advanced level in Grade 10. However, the greatest number of students detected as potential dropouts were found among students enrolled in courses at the general level. The number of students identified at the basic level is higher than at the other two, but few students are enrolled at this level. A number of students taking advanced level courses in Grade 9 switch to general level in Grade 10.

This "setback" surely helps shape the attitudes and perceptions of a fair number of students. These

"negative" attitudes and the way in which the students see themselves and those around them may play a key role in the decision to quit school. The intervention strategies are thus directed, in particular, toward the students enrolled in courses at the general level.

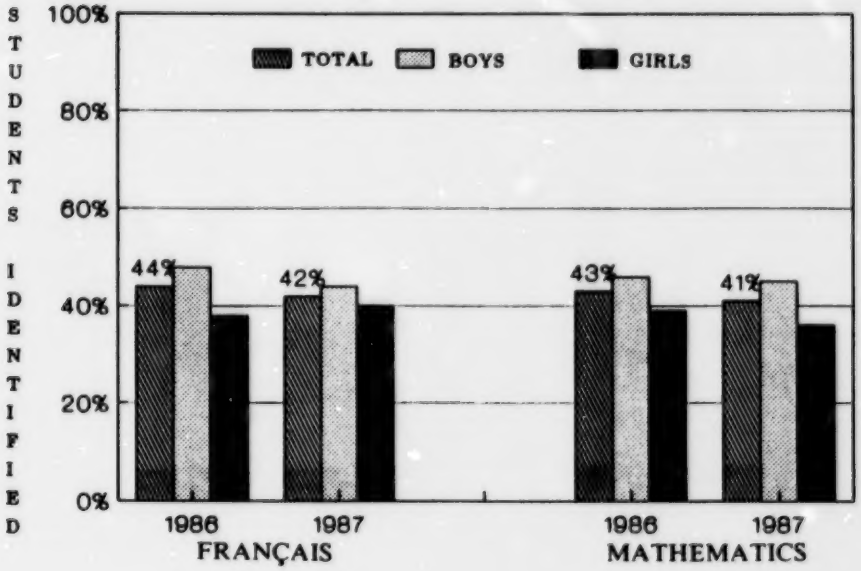
**F I G U R E 5**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Français and Mathematics, BASIC Level
"School and Me?", 1986 and 1987



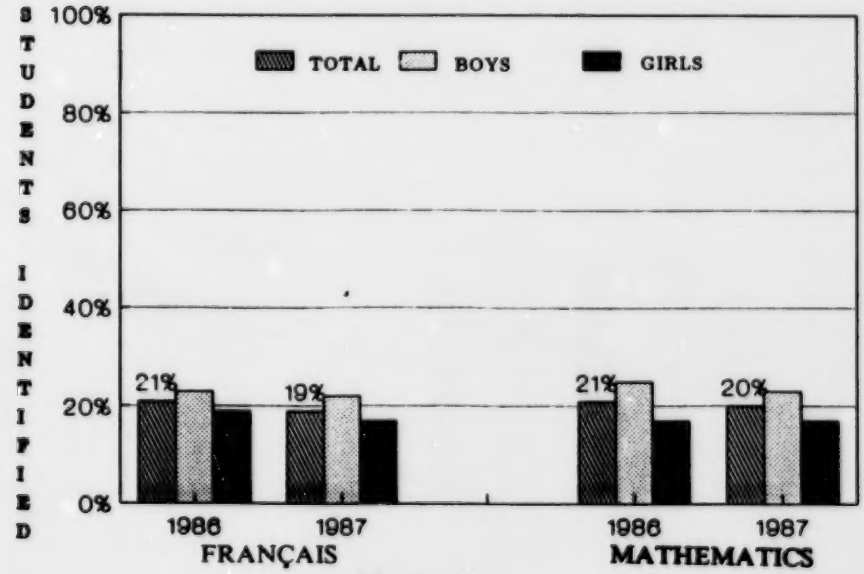
**F I G U R E  6**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Français and Mathematics, GENERAL Level
"School and Me?", 1986 and 1987



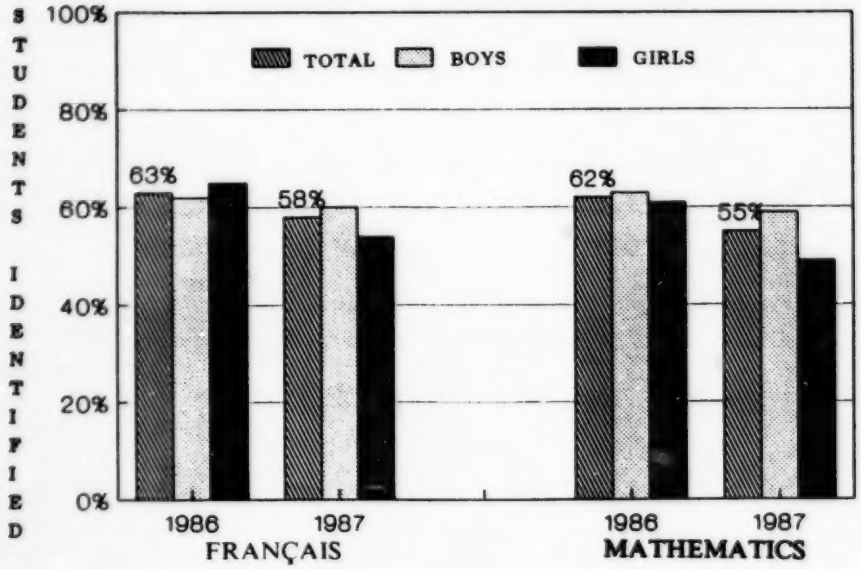

**F I G U R E  7**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Français and Mathematics, ADVANCED Level
"School and Me?", 1986 and 1987



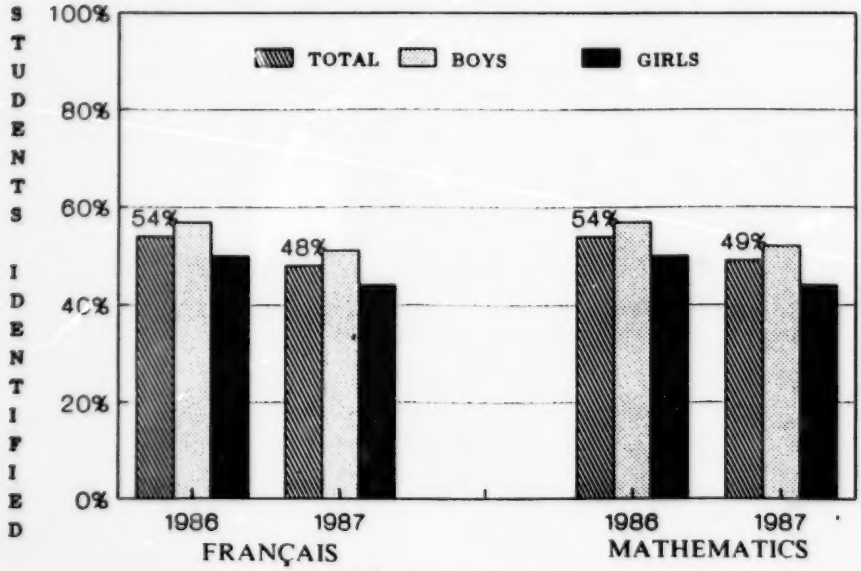
**F I G U R E  8**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 10
Français and Mathematics, BASIC Level
"School and Me?", 1986 and 1987



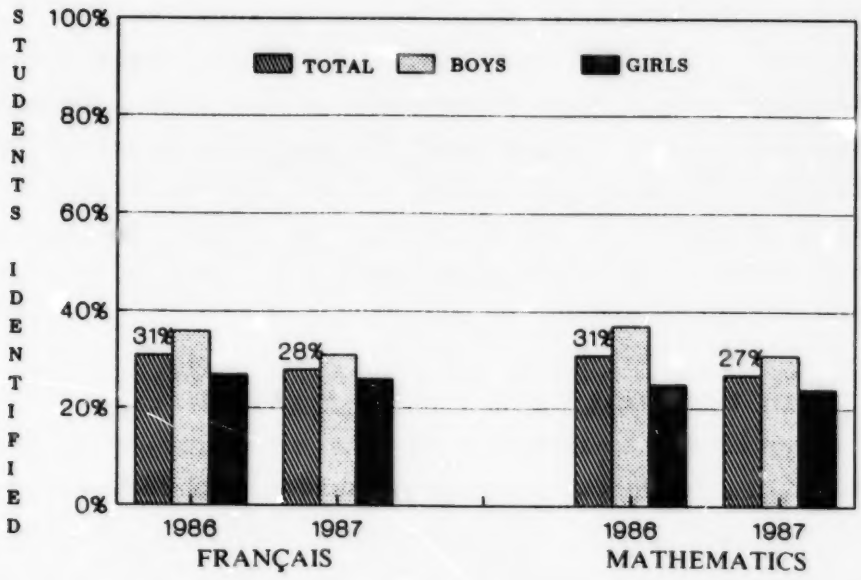

**F I G U R E  9**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 10
Français and Mathematics, GENERAL Level
"School and Me?", 1986 and 1987



**F I G U R E  10**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 10
Français and Mathematics, ADVANCED Level
"School and Me?", 1986 and 1987



## 2.3 RESULTS ACCORDING TO AREA

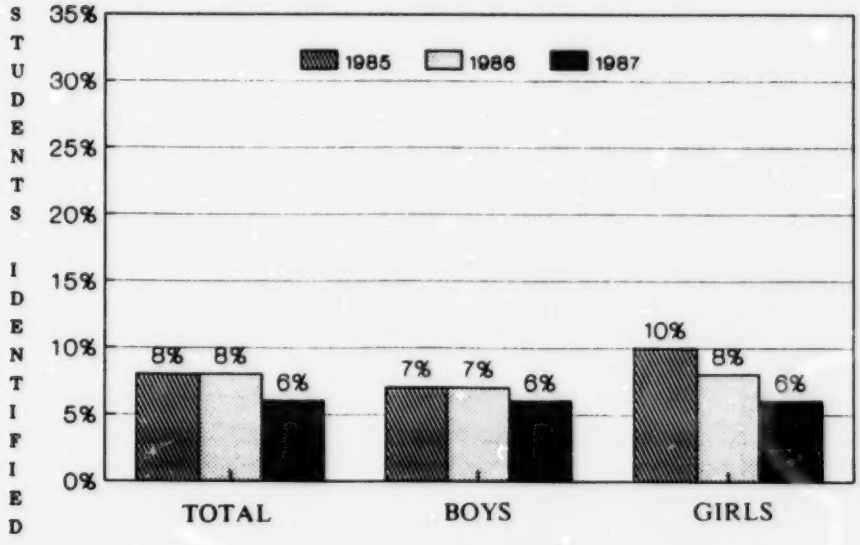
Throughout the project, the analysis of the percentage of students identified in each area of the questionnaire was helpful in developing and orienting the types of interventions suggested. The results according to area are shown in Figures 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. The most striking characteristics of the data collected over the three-year period was the relative stability in the percentage of students detected in each area. Naturally, there were fluctuations in the percentages of students identified (both boys and girls) but, aside from a few exceptions, the initial pattern was repeated throughout the entire period.

In the Family Characteristics area, great stability was noted with respect to the percentage of students identified - the overall percentage in this area remained approximately the same throughout the project's three stages. Moreover, the results for both boys and girls are very similar. However, when the results from the schools are examined, there is significant fluctuation in the rate of students identified between schools. In schools where a significant percentage of students were taking basic and general courses, a larger number indicated through their answers that their family situation was such that they were not encouraged to stay in school. The parents' academic background, socio-economic status, and the family's general attitude toward education are important factors in this area of the student's life. The schools where a significant number of students were identified in this area were able to orient their interventions more toward a social work perspective, toward mentoring and group counselling. It should be noted that in a number of schools, a higher percentage of girls were identified under Family Characteristics. Those involved with the

intervention programs could, therefore, pay particular attention to this group of girls.

**F I G U R E 11**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Family Characteristics
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987



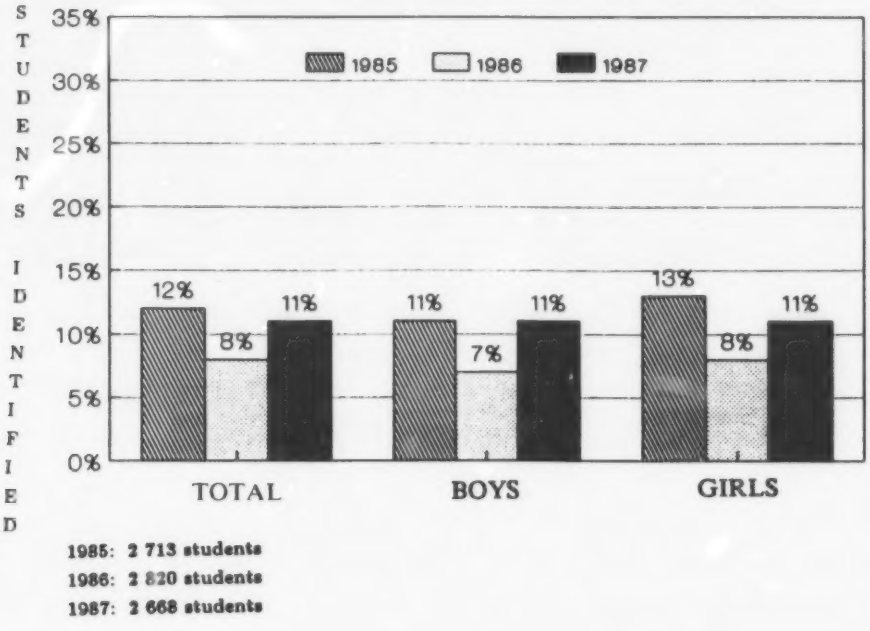

1985: 2 713 students
1986: 2 820 students
1987: 2 668 students

While the cohorts of students from which the data were collected obviously varied from one year to the next, the percentage of students identified in the Feeling of Isolation area was relatively stable. Generally speaking, the results were the same for both boys and girls. In most of the participating schools, however, this was the area in which the highest number of students were identified. In our opinion, the isolation that teenagers may feel at the beginning of their high school careers is one of the key factors (in the long run) in their decision

to quit school. The isolation, the gulf created between the student and his or her peer group and teachers, and between the curriculum and the student's expectations are all factors in the decision to drop out. However, the fair number of students who admitted to feeling isolated in high school may be those who would react very positively to the introduction of a mentoring program.

**F I G U R E 12**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Feeling of Isolation
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987

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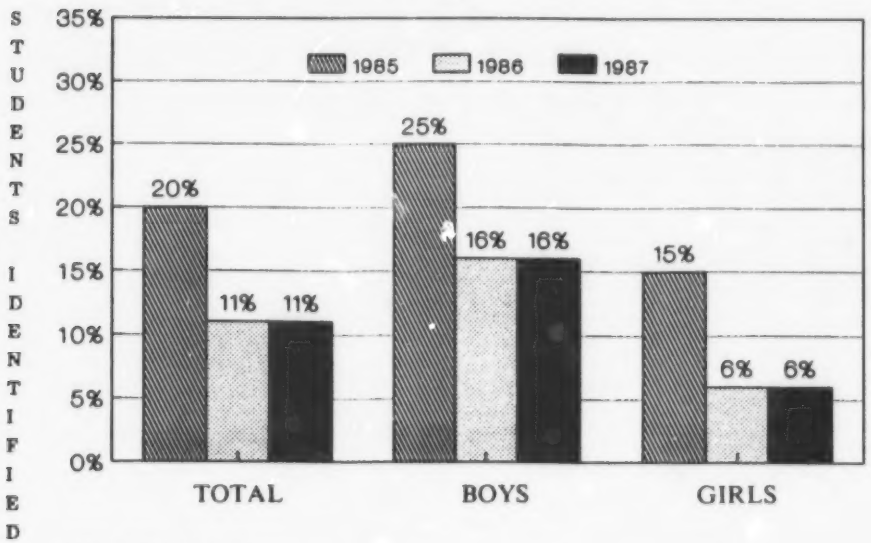
Significant differences may be seen in the Academic Plans area. The difference between the overall results obtained following the initial use of the questionnaire in 1985 and those obtained subsequently are worthy of note. This significant difference can be attributed to

two factors. Firstly, most of the participating schools committed themselves from the start to better informing the students and encouraging them to set more reasonable goals for themselves. Secondly, the provincial campaign to introduce different projects to help dropouts was vigorously undertaken in 1985. As well, during the first year, teachers were made aware of the dropout phenomenon in various ways. Due to these two factors, the number of students identified as having problems with their academic plans decreased substantially. Despite this, however, a significant number of students were identified in this area.

**F I G U R E 13**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Academic Plans
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987

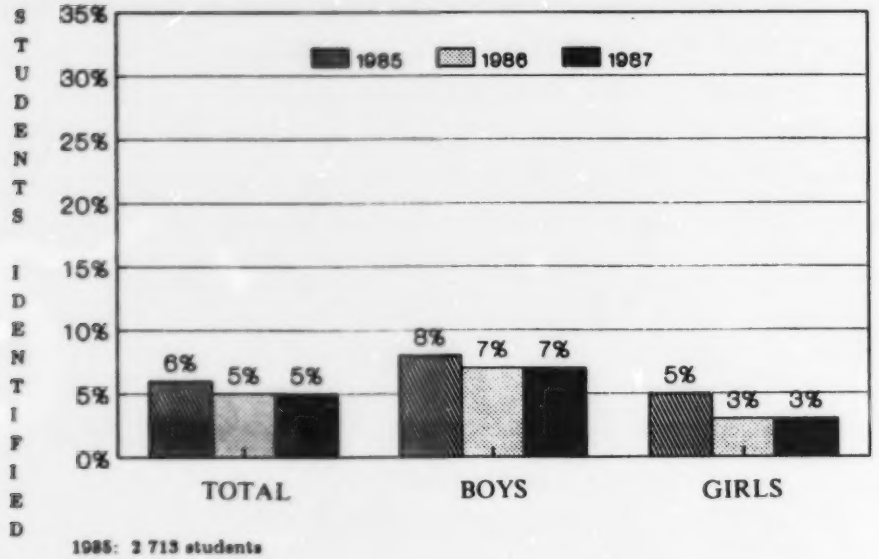



1985: 2 713 students
1986: 2 820 students
1987: 2 668 students

Throughout the project, the problems related to academic plans proved to affect more boys than girls. As mentioned in our three annual reports, a larger number of boys expect to quit school and do not see themselves as having the interest or necessary ability to graduate. A larger number of boys than girls have experienced setbacks since elementary school. This is reflected in the results for the boys in several areas, but especially with respect to academic plans. The results obtained in Academic Performance and Truancy followed the same pattern for all of the participating schools. On the one hand, the percentage of students identified has remained stable while, on the other hand, a greater number of boys than girls have been found to have serious problems with respect to their diligence at school and academic performance. As was the case over the entire three-year period, the difference between boys and girls in these areas becomes more obvious in Grade 10. The students who intend to go on to graduate become more determined each year to achieve their goals, while the potential dropouts seem to collect ideas and attitudes that will make them decide to quit school.

**F I G U R E  14**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Academic Performance
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987




1985: 2 713 students
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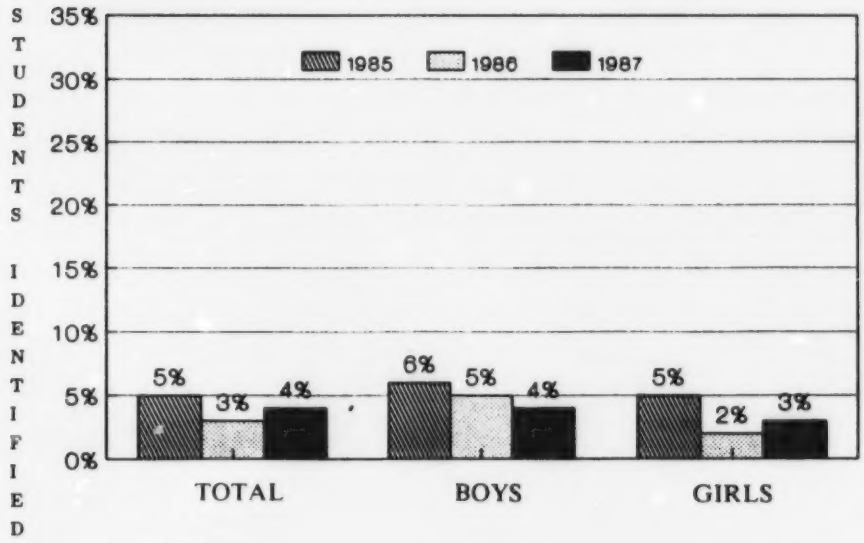
1987: 2 668 students

**F I G U R E  15**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Truancy
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987




1985: 2 713 students
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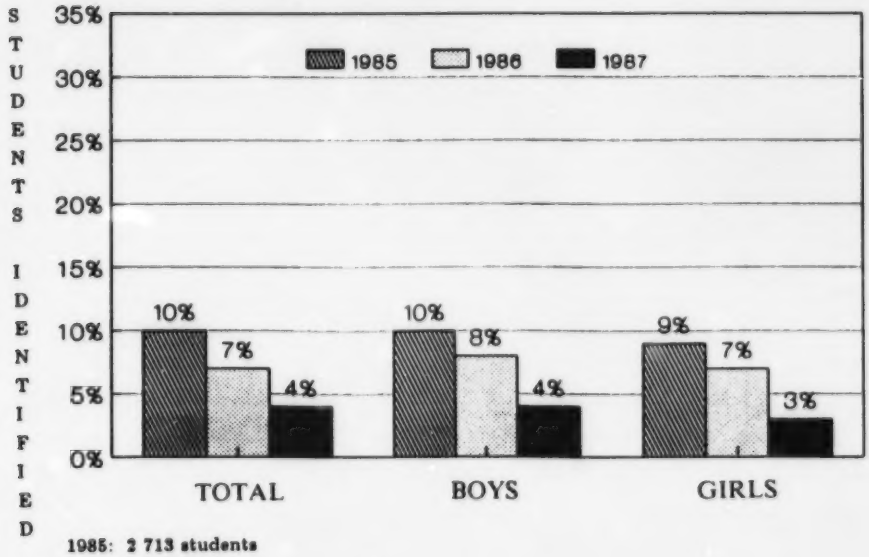
1987: 2 668 students

The results obtained in the Self-Confidence area did not follow the same pattern as in the other areas of the questionnaire. At the three levels of difficulty, the results may fluctuate widely from one school to the next and from one year to the next. Self-confidence proved to be an extremely sensitive area among the different cohorts of students who completed the questionnaire. While Figure 16 reveals little difference in the results obtained for boys and girls, this is not the case with respect to the overall results, which varied greatly from one school to the next. Analysis of the results in this area proved useful and accurate when they were examined in the context of a subgroup and on an individual basis.

**F I G U R E 16**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Self-confidence
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987

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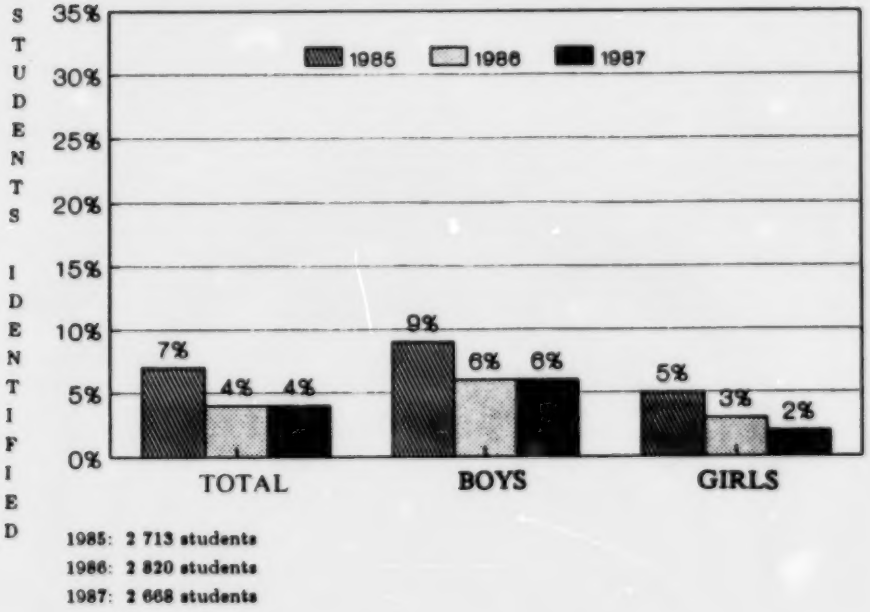
1986: 2 820 students
1987: 2 668 students

A greater number of boys expressed a strong Need for Teacher Support. The annual reports on the three stages reveal that in this particular area, the difference between boys and girls becomes even more significant in Grade 10. The boys state that they do not feel they have the support of their teachers. The gap which occurs between teachers and students (especially boys) may be an important factor in the decision to drop out. Whether the lack of support is real or only perceived as such by the student, it may be the deciding factor for this minority. Mentoring sessions with these students or any other intervention method aimed at encouraging and developing positive interaction between these teenagers and those involved with education may prove very effective in creating a feeling of belonging in these students - a feeling necessary to all of us.

**F I G U R E 17**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Need for Teacher Support
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987

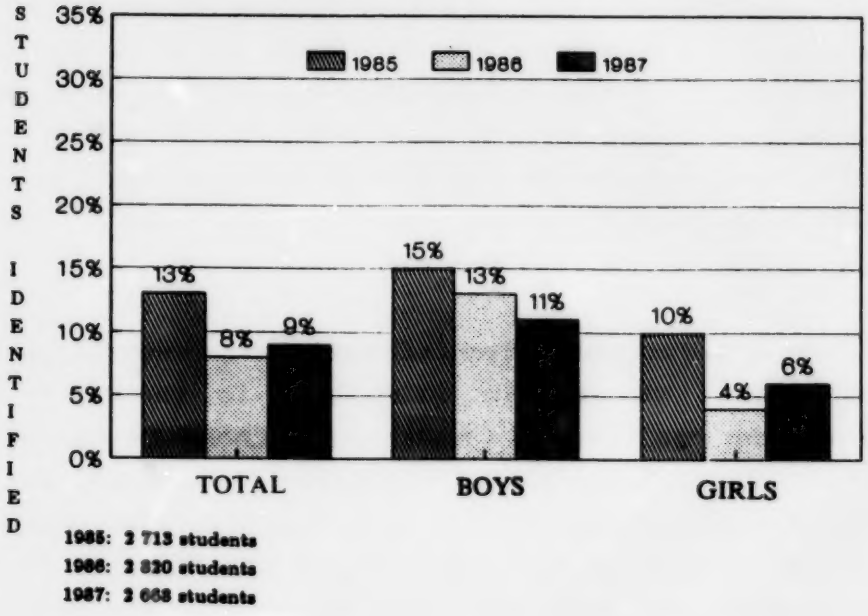



1985: 2 713 students
1986: 2 820 students
1987: 2 668 students

The results obtained in the Interest in School area may be considered a summary of the patterns seen in the other areas of the questionnaire. The overall results reveal the general patterns of the three stages of the project, while clearly indicating the substantial differences in the results for boys versus girls in the different areas.

**F I G U R E 18**

Percentage of Students Identified, Grade 9
Interest in School
"School and Me?", 1985, 1986 and 1987




We noted that a number of students enter high school with little or no interest in school. Secondary school teachers and administrators cannot be blamed for all dropouts. For a large number of students, dropping out is the result of a process that began in elementary school. If students wait until they get to high school before

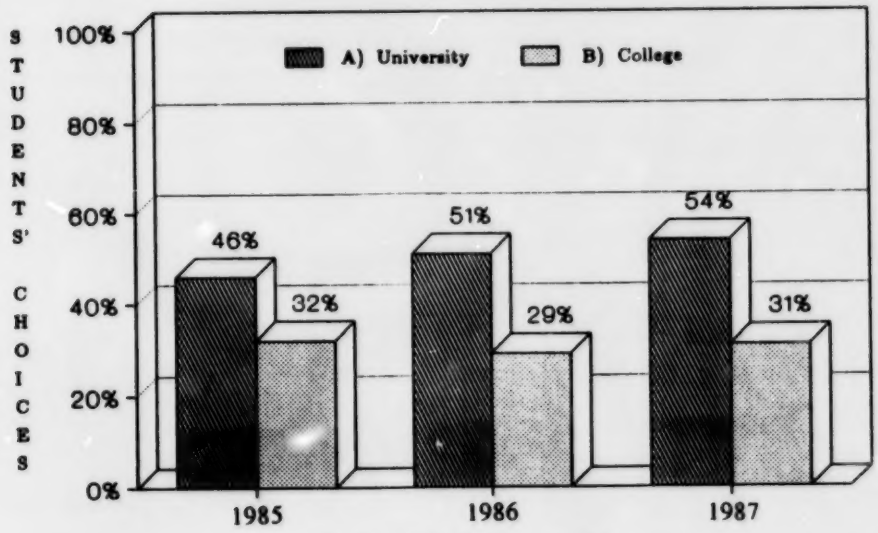
dropping out, it is purely for legal reasons. The high school experience may represent the straw that breaks the camel's back and it is possible that if some of the intervention strategies were implemented, they may help a number of these students to graduate. In addition, work will have to be done on the dropout issue at the intermediate and elementary levels.

Detailed analysis of the answers given to each question are included in the reports of the three stages of the project. (These reports are available only on microfiche.) Overall, the data collected generally changed very little. It is true that the first time the questionnaire was used, a higher number of students were identified in each area and naturally, this is reflected in the results for each question. The number of students detected decreased in Stage II and held steady in Stage III. Some of the patterns discussed earlier in this report with respect to the results by area do, of course, reappear in the results for the questions.

One constant already discussed (and which is obvious with respect to certain questions) is the difference between the results for the boys and those of the girls. Question 5 is an example of this (see Figures 19, 20, and 21). Throughout the project, it was seen that the vast majority of students were considering attending college or university. As previously mentioned, these unrealistic expectations held by a fair number of students may contribute to the setbacks some of them experience. It is obvious that there is a significant difference between the expectations of boys and those of girls. A much higher percentage of girls were planning to attend university.

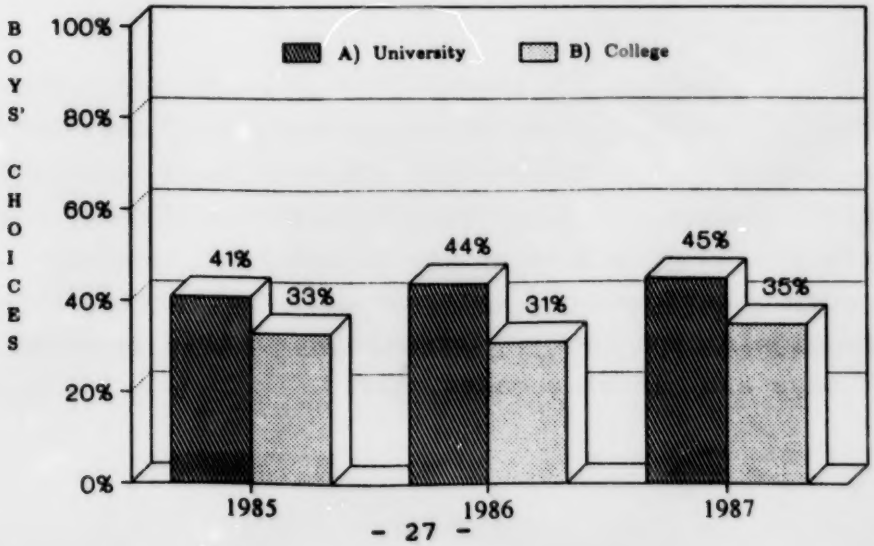
**F I G U R E  19**

**Question 5: How far do you intend to pursue your studies?**
**Results of Choices A and B, 1985, 1986 and 1987**
**Grade 9 Students**



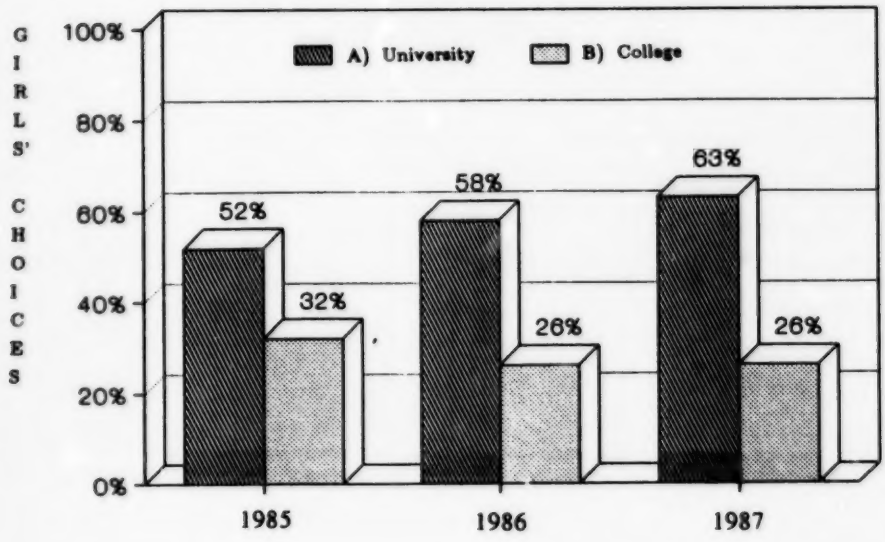

**F I G U R E  20**

**Question 5: How far do you intend to pursue your studies?**
**Results of Choices A and B, 1985, 1986 and 1987**
**Grade 9 BOYS**



**F I G U R E  21**

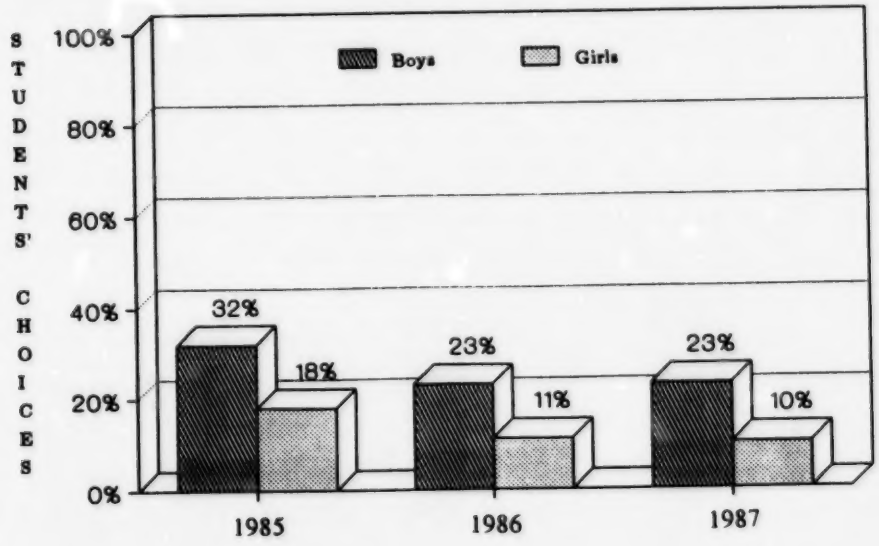
**Question 5: How far do you intend to pursue your studies?**
**Results of Choices A and B, 1985, 1986 and 1987**
**Grade 9 GIRLS**




In Question 29 (see Figure 22), we note that from Grade 9 onward, a much higher percentage of boys preferred to have a job, rather than go to school. In fact, a larger number of boys had experienced setbacks prior to entering high school. Their opinions regarding their academic performance, interest in school, etc. attest to the significant lack of interest among this large minority of boys and, in some cases, girls.

**F I G U R E  22**

**Question 29: I would prefer to have a job, rather than go to school.**
**Results of Choice A - True, 1985, 1986 and 1987**
**Boys and Girls, Grade 9**



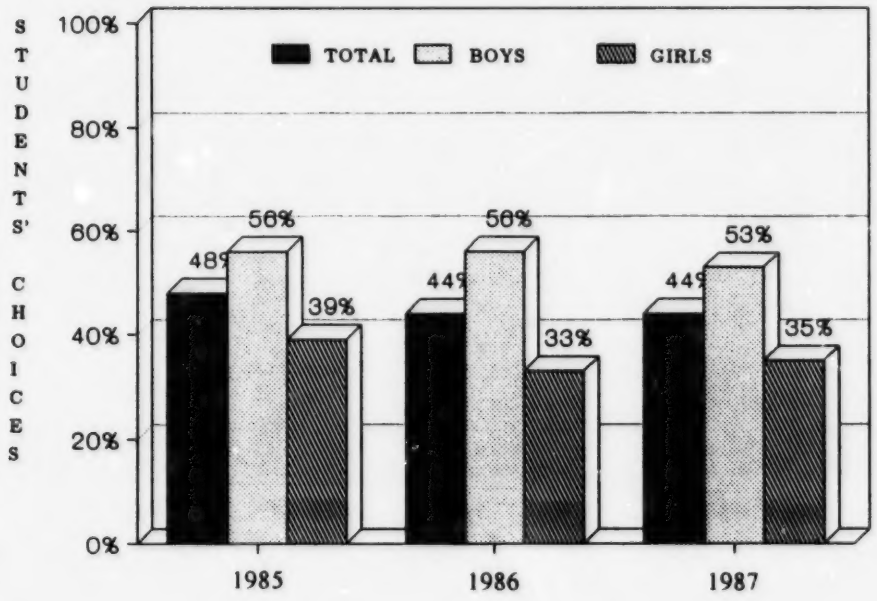

The last example of this difference between boys and girls is illustrated in Question 48 (Figure 23). Many more of the boys maintain that they feel much more "worthwhile" doing outside activities than they do in school (in 1987, 53 per cent of boys and 37 per cent of girls). Naturally, these opinions and perceptions are going to influence these students in their decision to quit school.

**F I G U R E  23**

Question 48: I have more success in my outside activities than I do in school.

Results of Choice A - True, 1985, 1986 and 1987

Grade 9 Students



**PART III.**

## 3. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

In many respects, the most important element of our project is that concerning intervention strategies. Once the students likely to quit school have been identified, the work has only just begun. Then with the availability of reliable statistics, the schools must decide on the best strategy to help these students.

It was during a pilot project that we were able to prove our hypotheses regarding intervention strategies that would be effective and "worthwhile" for both the school and the students identified. Through the data analysis and concrete results of this pilot project, we realized that mentoring sessions with teachers (or school personnel) gave the best results. Obviously, the strategies suggested had to be simple to implement and fit easily into the structure of all the schools. They could also not be costly in terms of time and money.

During the first stage of the project, in 1985, much of the work was making the administrators, guidance counsellors, and teachers in the 28 participating schools aware of the dropout problem in Ontario and the kind of results that could be obtained from the "School and Me?" questionnaire. We were also able to suggest three types of intervention strategies which had proven effective during our pilot project. That first year, the enthusiasm of the schools was more than encouraging - only four schools decided against introducing a structured intervention strategy. We noted a certain constancy over the three-year term of our pilot project. The schools that showed the greatest enthusiasm at the beginning of the project are those which, over the years, went on to

develop and perfect the strategy they chose in 1985. This was the case for 7 secondary schools that decided, at the project's outset, to implement a mentoring program. These schools now have a smooth-running, established mentoring system. Over the years, other schools have tried various intervention strategies that we have suggested and have eventually found the strategy best suited to the needs of their potential dropouts (taking into account the school staff and administrators). Unfortunately, three or four schools chose only to carry on with the regular individual counselling available in all French-language secondary schools.

The primary intervention strategy suggested to the schools was the organization of "special" individual counselling sessions. This strategy has proven most effective in meeting the particular needs of each student identified. These individual sessions enable the student to discuss privately the problem he or she is experiencing. The counsellor may then attempt to have the student talk about the problems expressed in the answers to the "School and Me?" questionnaire. This intervention strategy was very popular in the schools throughout the three years of the project. However, it should be mentioned that "special" individual counselling was primarily an adjunct to other, more structured intervention programs.

The next intervention strategy was group counselling. Attempted in a number of schools, this strategy demands a great deal of time from those involved and requires qualified personnel. It is also important that the sessions with the potential dropouts be held fairly frequently to have any success. Given these requirements, this strategy was not the most popular.

The intervention strategy most frequently suggested to the participating high schools was mentoring, for a number of reasons. Mentoring meets all of the criteria necessary for an intervention strategy: easy to organize and a reasonable amount of time or money from the schools and those involved.

Certain elements are essential to running a mentoring program. First, the teachers (or other educators) must voluntarily decide to become mentors to students detected as potential dropouts and to pay special attention to them. It has been our experience that it is preferable to offer mentoring to fewer students, rather than force teachers to become mentors if they are uncomfortable with the idea.

Whenever possible, it is preferable for a teacher to be matched, anonymously, with a student he or she already knows. Teachers who decide to become mentors agree to have daily contact with the students concerned. Naturally, under no circumstances, is this contact to occur as a formal meeting. Basically, mentoring involves greeting the student in a special way in the hallway (for instance), occasionally encouraging him or her or showing interest in his or her activities and concerns. The mentor should not, however, play psychologist to the student and attempt to solve all his or her problems at any price. The job is primarily to establish a friendly, "big brother/big sister" type of relationship which will inspire the student's confidence. However, the type of relationship that develops will naturally depend on the personality, character, and tastes of both student and mentor.

When a mentoring program is introduced into a school, those in charge of the project must plan regular meetings

- every three to four weeks - for the mentors. In fact, it is important for the mentors to have an opportunity to discuss their experiences, exchange ideas and offer mutual support.

**PART IV.**

## 4. COMMENTS

This paper summarizes our activities and the results obtained during the three stages of the project. The experience gained during this period with those involved with the dropout issue and the data analyses performed allow us to maintain that our work (along with a number of other projects) is the first step on the road to change ensuring that our target group will be better served in the future.

The responsibility of educating the students enrolled in our schools belongs to all of those involved with education - the teachers, school administrators, elected officials, and, occasionally, the researchers who work in that vast field we call "education". Now, at the end of our project, we wish not only to state our conclusions and recommendations regarding the needs to be met to help potential dropouts, but to try to reflect the interests of those in the education field with whom we worked.

Our first suggestion is that teacher training and in-service courses incorporate certain data, analyses, and conclusions that resulted from this project. Present and future teachers would be better prepared to deal with potential dropouts if they were more aware of the positive effect they could have on these students.

Currently, we feel that it would be worthwhile for the school boards, teachers, and, especially, the students to have someone on the school board involved in the dropout issue. This individual could co-ordinate the implementation of certain intervention strategies to be incorporated by all the schools. It is our opinion that

the success of such a structured effort by the school boards will require co-operation between the Ministry of Education and the boards.

Those involved with education at all levels (especially in the ministry) should - along with the school boards and through their publications, advertising, and the conferences they organize - put emphasis on obtaining a high school diploma. Our education "system" is biased toward the minority of students who go on to college or university. It is our belief that we are neglecting to emphasize the very real benefits that can come from having a high school diploma.

We also suggest that, if they so desire, intermediate and secondary schools could identify some of their students as potential dropouts. In other words, they could offer their students the opportunity of saying that they are having serious school-related problems. The students thus identified should, from that point on, be given special attention. We feel that the mandate of those involved at all levels of education is to ensure that all students are able to finish a program of instruction enabling them to reach the transition phase between school and the labour market with the best possible chance of success.

When faced with a new problem in education, we toc often attempt to find a solution, a type of intervention, or framework that will work for everyone. The dropout issue requires more than just one solution. Our study of the issue, the work we have done, and our experience with a large number of students have convinced us of that.

However, analysis of the data collected over three years from a large number of students leads us to believe

that there is a constant which must be incorporated into any intervention program intended for the target group. No matter what intervention strategy or program is chosen by those involved with education, it must somehow reach the affective domaine of the potential dropout. Certainly, these potential dropouts need information, occasionally additional training, or special assistance to help them succeed in a given subject. However, the vast majority of these students have problems related to the affective domaine. Genuine interest from an adult, which may be shown in a number of ways, is the key to making these young people aware of the benefits of an academic program and the richness of education in general. Education must not be considered a privilege in our society. As educators, we should attempt to help the greatest possible number of students be "better-equipped" to meet the needs of today's job market and our changing society.